

Workers' Weekly

Vol. 21 Nos. 19-20

July 30 - August 6, 1994

20p

PRESS COMMUNIQUE:

RCPB(ML) Demands that British Government Take Decisive Step for Peace in Ireland

July 30, 1994

A Press Communique was issued this morning by RCPB(ML) in response to recent government statements on the situation in northern Ireland and on the stand taken by Sinn Fein at its recent conference. The communique, which was sent to the government, political parties, the press, trade unions, and to communist and other progressive and democratic organisations, reads as follows:

August 14 this year will mark 25 years since British troops were redeployed on the streets of northern Ireland. Is it not time for the British government to cease blaming others for the bloodshed and violence and itself take the decisive step needed for peace?

ern Ireland Secretary Sir Patrick Mayhew said that a change in the constitution of the Irish Republic to relinquish its territorial claim over the six counties of the north of Ireland was necessary to remove the main roadblock to a solution in Ireland. This week the Northern Ireland

Last week the North-

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ON THE SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION ON INTERVENTION IN HAITI

See page 5

■ Editorial ■ Strengthening Workers' Weekly

Workers' Weekly is the newspaper of RCPB(ML), which is to say that it gives the line and views of the Party. It is designed to serve the cutting edge of the Party's work. At the same time, the paper is directed at and based on the working class, both the advanced and broad sections of the class. It is the Party's position that the working class must provide itself with the necessary consciousness and organisation to take up its

role of leading society out of the crisis towards a new, socialist society. *Workers' Weekly* is geared towards facilitating the working class accomplishing this endeavour.

In this period, the primary concern of *Workers' Weekly* is that of serving the cutting edge of the Party's programme aimed at its next National Consultative Conference in November. In this connection, the Central Committee of the Party recently em-

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Rail workers should put forward their own demands in the strike

OVER the last two months or so, signal workers have successfully carried out a series of one day strikes and have extended this to a 48-hour and other stoppages.

This is a struggle in which the signal workers are seeking to redress to some extent the huge increase in the exploitation of their labour which has accompanied the introduction of new signal technology prior to and as part of the privatisation of British Rail. In this they have gained warm support and sympathy from the

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*THE PARTY AND ITS WORK***Progress depends on the basic units**

ONE fundamental and unique feature of this century is that it has seen the working class, on an international scale, take the centre stage and become the leading force in society for the first time. Obviously this development has been uneven, and has seen both success and failure; but where the working class came to power for a protracted period, such as in the USSR, it was able to build a new, enlightened society free from exploitation of person by person. The key to this success was the application of Marxist-Leninist theory and practice to the concrete conditions of the time. And where this key was not used, failure followed.

The conditions have changed, the period is one of temporary retreat; but the key is the same, and if this key is not used, again there can be no success. Why were the gains of the revolution in the USSR lost? A major reason was that the dictatorship of the proletariat was turned into a dictatorship of the party, and one factor in this was the emasculation of democratic centralism as the Marxist-Leninist organisational norm. It is through the party's basic units that the workers enter the party and build it, and if these do not function according to demo-

cratic centralist norms, or are liquidated, the party can no longer be the party of the working class and neither will it be democratic. The example of the Soviet Union shows that without the basic organisations you can have centralism but you will not have democracy. In the Soviet Union the consequence was that the party, instead of being the source of enlightenment and empowerment and the motive force for progress, became a millstone round the people's necks.

In order to be the most advanced, most organised

vanguard of the working class, the party must be an integral part of it, must work inseparably from it and must be built by it. How can the party develop its positions and programme if it is detached from the class, if the party's general line and programme does not even reach the workers? And how can the class take up the vanguard positions and harmonise its struggles if it is detached from its party? This is the space that the basic unit aims to occupy. This is the foundation stone, the bedrock without which democratic centralism becomes nothing more than an empty phrase. The work we are engaged in is motivated by concern for the fate of the people and the necessity to break the shackles of capital, and the forms developed to achieve this only have meaning in this context. Being at the vortex of this work, the basic unit must of necessity exercise the broadest initiative and crea-

tivity in working out and implementing methods that will activate the class around the party's programme as well as give expression to the demands of the class. All the latent talent and initiative of the comrades as well as the workers must be harnessed and given focus through the work of the basic unit. Of course, the comrades work in other spheres as well, such as the trade unions, and organisations with particular or limited goals. But the difference between these and the basic unit is that the successes in the first are relative and temporary, while to build the units is to build the party itself – the sole guarantee that power, once captured, can be developed and strengthened on a permanent basis.

It is because building the basic units is synonymous with building the communist party that historically the units and the democratic centralist method of party building have been the target of attack by all who have an interest in maintaining the status quo. As mentioned earlier, the restoration of capitalism in the USSR could not have been brought about without the destruction of the red spine of the party, the party cell; and in Britain in the '50s the old party's factory cells were liquidated on the basis that "community cells were sufficient", i.e. that the party should not be built as the vanguard party of the working class but as something else.

Workers' Weekly

Newspaper of the
Revolutionary Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist)

July 30 - August 6, 1994 Volume 21, Numbers 19-20

Subscription rates (Inland and EC):

45p per issue, £1.80 for 4 issues, £11.70 for 26 issues, £23.40 for 52 issues

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WORKING CLASS MOVEMENT

How are health workers going to seize the initiative on health care?

THERE is a need for the sectional interests of workers to be harmonised within a single programme for the class for the solution of the crisis. At the Durham miners' gala this year it could be said that the seeds of recognition of that fact were present. Public services workers stood shoulder to shoulder with the miners and their families in solidarity around the nub of the struggle at this time: should the well being of the people be put at the centre or not?

What this highlights is that, at the present, the battle between whether society is going to be driven further backwards or whether it is going to advance is taking place on the question of health, education, and what is termed the welfare state and whether the well being of the people will determine the direction of the entire economy.

For example, since the founding of the NHS in 1947 there has never been so much concern expressed by medical staff, administrators, health workers and people in the communities as to the future of the provision of free public health care in Britain. Almost daily people face the increasing cuts in beds, in services and in the jobs and pay and conditions of health workers, in increasing hidden charges in one way or another. Large campaigns have been launched to oppose the closure of hospitals such as the Newcastle General and Shotley Bridge.

However, despite this opposition, the government is continuing to implement its "reforms", and the health

market that they have introduced is continuing to destroy the universal health system and the closures continue. One of the greatest concerns is the speed with which the teaching hospitals and centres of medical excellence in London as well as at regional centres are being dismantled. In this situation, health workers as well as people in the community feel that in spite of their efforts they are not gaining the initiative. The same problem arises with the pit closure programme, the closure programme for the shipyards and so on.

The ruling circles are intent on destroying the gains of the 20th century in such a way that large scale monopoly production exists as the economic base, while medievalism is brought back in the superstructure with each individual left to fend for themselves. With the mines and shipyards closed, there is now a fear that the same fate awaits the hospitals and other public services. The people of the North as well as the rest of the country sense that the future is one in which there is per-

manent mass unemployment with employment confined to a few high tech factories and service industries and where the public services such as health care are reduced to a second rate service for those who cannot pay. All the present social ills of this policy of retrogression which are already being heaped on the people would only be magnified unless this policy is reversed.

How are the health workers going to gain the initiative along with all workers in reversing this policy of retrogression? It is not sufficient for the health workers to carry on as they are. How are they going to raise their struggle from being a protest movement which represents one section of the working class and people to one which is part of the whole working class movement where all the sectional interests are harmonised? The most crucial task is that health work-

ers and other workers must adopt their own political outlook which gives them the political consciousness and organisation to act as an independent political force, with their own political programme so that they operate not via political representatives, but directly in the political arena. In this respect, our Party has published a draft document, *There Is a Way Out of the Crisis*, as a contribution to this discussion in the working class movement and to focus attention on the need for workers to see this question as key to any advance. Without such discussion among health workers, it will not be possible for them to seize the initiative in the struggle for health care and with the entire working class create the conditions for a new society where health care is guaranteed as a right of every citizen.

*Northern Region
Correspondent*

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Against the education cuts

THE following article is based on a speech delivered by a representative of the Revolutionary Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) at a recent meeting against the education cuts held in London.

As you are all aware, there have been huge cut-backs in all sectors of education over the past two decades. In schools, the 1988 Education Reform Act introduced measures for financial self-management of schools and began a process of taking schools out of local authority control. Apart from the aim of breaking up comprehensive education, these measures have been used to further cut back the expenditure on compulsory education and to increase class sizes. In further education, the 1992 Act made further education colleges autonomous organisations owned and controlled by a Board of Governors, the majority of whom have to be "employment-interest" governors, or capitalists. Direct control of funding by the Further Education Funding Council has been used to cut back expenditure on this sector each year since, as well as to enforce changes to the contracts of teachers and lecturers in colleges. The growth in class sizes in universities as well as the cutbacks in grants and the plans for the introduction of tuition fees and so on are well known.

What is also well known is that these changes have met with universal opposition from educationalists at all levels. People are demanding an enlightened

public education policy, including a guarantee for free and universal education. There is no doubt that the struggle for such demands will continue to increase in coming years. The question we would like to address in this talk is what lies behind this situation and the direction the struggle against these cutbacks should take.

What has to be recognised is that the cutbacks in education are part of the whole strategy of the government and the bourgeoisie to withdraw from the obligation of the state to provide public services. Historically speaking, the recognition of the state's responsibility to provide and continually raise what we can call *public well being* is one of the achievements which resulted from the battle against feudalism. This included, amongst other things, individual and public health, education, pensions and welfare services. Public education dates from the middle of the last century, whilst pensions and national insurance date from the beginning of this century, and universal secondary education and the National Health Service date from the second world war. The bourgeoisie had definite interests at that time in granting these things, such as boosting its profits and staving off the threat of socialism and

communism. Today, faced with serious crisis and sensing no danger from world socialism and communism, it finds the best way to maximise profits is to withdraw public guarantees and cut back funds for welfare provision year after year.

The government justifies its cutbacks by claiming that the provision of such services is not a fundamental obligation of the state to all citizens. Instead, people must consider making their own provisions for their pensions, or funding their own higher education, whilst the state should provide only for those who are said to be "most in need". In reality, what is happening is that they are carrying out these huge cutbacks in public sector spending in order to provide funds for big business. This talk of looking after those who are "most in need" is a pretext to rob the state treasury for the benefit of business.

It is important to recognise that if production were geared towards satisfying the increasing cultural and material needs of the people, the economy would never go into crisis. But this would also mean that big business would no longer be able to make maximum capitalist profit. In general, we can say that in order to find a way out of the crisis in education, as well as on other fronts, what needs to be done is exactly the opposite of what the government is doing. By cutting back on all

fronts, the government is contributing towards the deepening of the crisis. What is needed is increased investments in the needs of the people on the front of education, health, social care, pensions and so on.

The logic of the government is that the handing over of billions to the private sector is an investment, whilst funding the public sector, including education, is an "expenditure", a waste of public funds. In reality, it is investment of public funds in business which is robbery, whilst expenditure on the needs of the people is an investment in both the short-term and long-term interests of society.

At the present time, our Party has pointed out, the fundamental struggle in Britain is between those who are using the pretext that the "private sector" is supposedly the basis of prosperity in order to plunder the state treasury and block the path to progress for their own benefit, and those who are demanding investments and public guarantees for the well-being of all. Spending on education, as well as health care, welfare, the arts, sports and other necessities must be increased, not decreased, with the aim of meeting the vital needs of the people and of the progress of society. It cannot be accepted that such necessities are not affordable.

The fight against the
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HAITI:

Once again UN Security Council endorses US-led invasion

ON Sunday, July 31, the United Nations Security Council voted approval for a US-led military invasion of Haiti to overthrow the military rulers who seized power in September 1991.

The Council, made up of representatives of 15 nations, 12 of whom voted in favour of the invasion, authorised the use of a multinational force. A number of Latin American countries openly opposed the Security Council resolution, such as Mexico, Uruguay, Venezuela and Cuba. Brazil, currently a Security Council member, also showed disapproval by its abstention on the resolution. The following day, a State of Siege came into force in that country. Meanwhile, news reports state that the US has 16 ships containing over 3,700 marines and soldiers and heavy military equipment on stand-by off the Haitian coast. Haiti, on the other hand, described as the poorest country in the Western hemisphere, is estimated to have a poorly equipped army of only 7,000 strong. The UN Secretary General Boutros Ghali said that the invasion would require a force of 15,000. Although it is claimed that the "permission" to in-

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Condemn British government's vote for intervention in Haiti

ON July 31, the British government voted in favour of the resolution at the United Nations Security Council authorising intervention by a multinational force to overthrow the government of Haiti and restore to power the former president Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

The British government should be condemned for this stand, which allows the US to intervene in Haiti to bring about a change of government.

The justification given for the intervention refers to the nature of the Haitian military government and the oppression of the people there – similar prettexts to those used by the United States in Somalia and Iraq. By using this logic, the authors of intervention try to conceal their aims of manipulating the UN Security Council for their own purposes, overturning principles such as non-interven-

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Cuba condemns Security Council Resolution on Haiti as violation of principles of international law

We are reprinting below the statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cuba on Resolution 940 of the UN Security Council on Haiti.

By the virtue of a resolution of the UN Security Council, a multinational force has been authorised to intervene in Haiti. It is an indisputable fact that behind the decision of the Security Council, there have been pressures by the United States, which far from seeking a just solution to the Haitian conflict, is seeking to guarantee its strategic interests in the region.

The history of the US presence in Haiti, open or covert, has led in every case to the establishment of bloody military regimes. Washington was not unaware of the coup overthrowing the legitimate constitutional government of Jean-Bertrand Aristide, a government that gave Haiti an alternative to solve the serious problems it faces.

The Republic of Cuba, one of the closest neighbours of Haiti, has firmly supported the actions adopted by the United Nations aimed at restoring democracy and constitutional order to this country. However, Cuba considers it necessary to express its strongest rejection of an act that will lead to the military intervention in Haiti, mandated by Security Council, a body whose main responsibility, according to the charter of the United Nations, is to maintain international peace and security.

Even by using many prettexts to demonstrate the contrary, the current situation in Haiti does not represent a threat to peace and security in the region, which is seriously threatened by the large concentration of US forces and personnel in the waters of the Caribbean sea with the excuse of the Haitian crisis.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cuba warns international public opinion of the serious consequences of this behaviour which is in line with repeated attempts to expand the powers and authority of the Security Council beyond those granted by the charter, establishing precedents violating the most sacred principles of international law, particularly those of territorial integrity and the sovereignty of states.

Havana

August 1, 1994

Rail workers should put forward their own demands in the strike

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rest of the working class and from the travelling public. Signal workers have rejected the demands of Railtrack and the government that they accept a low pay increase and agree to discuss a productivity deal, and are preparing for a protracted struggle to win their demands.

One conclusion which can be drawn from this struggle is that the government is not getting its own way in its attempts to impose retrogressive policies, such as attacking the rights of the workers, on society. The signal workers have refused to be cowed by the trade union laws which were aimed at suppressing such struggles and have used their initiative and organisation to overcome the obstacles to fighting under the present conditions.

The main problem facing the rail workers has not been that of waging the struggle, but of clarifying its aims and direction. According to various apologists in the trade union and labour movement, the struggle has only the most narrow aim and the workers do not have to consider the needs of society, the needs of the class and how the aims of the signal workers can be harmonised

with those of the working class as a whole.

For example, the Labour Party and TUC leaders have created the idea that without the government Railtrack would be ready to settle. In other words, they call on workers to make the issue one of stopping the government's interference in the dispute and agree to some compromise on pay when both Railtrack and the government are united on both increasing the exploitation of the signal workers and on privatising British Rail. To make the issue one solely of government interference in pay bargaining is not only to keep the perspective of the struggle in blinkers, but to encourage illusions about the aims of Railtrack and about the role of the government and its aims in the whole matter of the direction it is seeking to take the railways, along with the economy as a whole.

What is needed is for the signal workers and all rail workers to put forward their own demands in the strike, including the need to reverse even more the increased exploitation and to demand that the railway system must not be privatised. On the contrary, what is

needed is for the state to provide a national rail network available to and affordable by all. Such demands will place the signal workers consciously in the broad struggle going on in society for the well-being of the people in the face

of the retrogressive policies of the government. They also raise the question of how the working class can direct this struggle to take society out of crisis and towards a new society which has the well-being of the people at the centre.

UN Security Council

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nipulation, clearly a decisive factor in bringing the danger of invasion of Haiti that much nearer, is reported in the British media as a normal, acceptable and minor event.

Of the many obvious questions that such big-power manoeuvring raises is the fact that the claim of restoring the legitimate government and stable environment in Haiti is a flimsy pretext to pursue the policy of big powers, in this case the US, using the UN as a political and military shield. It also looks as though the people of the former Soviet state of Georgia will also suffer as a consequence of the unfolding events surrounding Haiti.

This brazen act of ma-

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British government's vote

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tion in the affairs of others established in the 20th century to govern relations between states.

It is a demand of the working class that such double standards in international affairs be done away with, standards whereby the big powers uphold the principle of non-

intervention when it suits them, but find pretexts to violate it when it does not. The working class stands for democratic principles in international affairs and opposes the attempts of the big powers to turn back the clock.

Condemn the British government's vote for intervention in Haiti!

**WORKERS' WEEKLY IS HAVING A
BREAK IN PUBLICATION OVER AUGUST**

Strengthening Workers' Weekly

Continued from page 1

phased that strengthening and developing the paper and its role are central to the work of the Party in this period. Thus *Workers' Weekly* is preoccupied with providing the means whereby this work will flourish, with the focus of fulfilling the needs of the Party and the working class for analysis of the political affairs of Britain and internationally, as well as putting forward the stands of the working class on vital questions of the life of the country. As well, as an integral part of this focus, the Party's newspaper is providing coverage on the Party and its work, and on the working class movement and on the democratic movement. Of course, in focusing in this way, the Party and its paper nevertheless do not lose sight of the strategic aim of the working class

for its complete emancipation and the emancipation of the whole of society.

The Party has analysed that improving the quality of *Workers' Weekly's* coverage is key to the advance of its work in this period, and the Central Committee of the Party is paying the greatest attention to this aspect of the work in the months ahead. In particular, the paper will strengthen its coverage of national politics, explaining their significance for the working class, in the light of the fact that the working class must put forward an independent programme to lead society out of the crisis. It will address questions in the workers movement and the democratic movement, questions arising from the struggles and events occurring in real life and from the stage of the movement, dealing with these from the

perspective of the working class and its line of march. And it will continue to take up questions from the life of the Party, the central tasks that the Party is grappling with, the ideological and theoretical considerations with which it is dealing. It will further deepen its coverage of international questions, and will develop its reporting of the International Communist Movement. In future months, we will carry further editorial columns, which will further elaborate on and assess the newspaper's policy.

Workers' Weekly calls on activists and supporters of the Party to contribute to and integrate with this work. This is a call to seriously discuss and distrib-

ute the newspaper. But it is also a call for activists and supporters to consider how they can write for the paper, contribute to strengthening its analysis and disseminating its positions, and use it as an organiser, so that *Workers' Weekly* can steadily become a force in the working class and communist movement, around the line of march that the Party is charting. And we call on workers themselves, as well as progressive and democratic forces in society, to read and distribute the paper, and become centres for its dissemination.

Workers' Weekly welcomes everyone's views on these issues, and we encourage all our readers to let us know what they think.

Against the education cuts

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cutbacks should in our view be taken up with the perspective of reversing these cutbacks, demanding increases in investments in the vital areas of people's needs and defeating the arguments of the bourgeoisie and government for cutbacks. The vast majority of people are dissatisfied with the present state of affairs and see the need for a modern society in which they have control over their lives, whilst it is only a minority, the ruling circles,

which are clinging to the past and reject a modern society. The struggle against the cutbacks should be carried through with precisely this perspective of opening the path to building a modern society, a socialist society, in which the rights of the people are guaranteed, in which they are empowered to take part in governance themselves and in which the economy is geared to meeting the continually increasing material and cultural needs of the people.

Concert for British withdrawal from Ireland

ON July 24, a concert organised by progressive musicians took place in London to commemorate 25 years of the redeployment of British troops in northern Ireland and to support the demand for British withdrawal.

The concert included performances of traditional Irish music, music written in support of the Irish people's struggle against British occupation, folk songs and other songs on traditional and democratic themes and other pieces.

The concert was an initiative in uniting a number of democratic musicians, upholding the principle of the right to self determination of the Irish people, and reflecting the movement to organise in Britain to demand that the British government totally withdraw from Ireland.

Demonstrate for British withdrawal from Ireland

A major demonstration is being held in London on August 13 to mark 25 years from the date when British troops were once again deployed on the streets of northern Ireland.

RCPB(ML) considers this an important event for workers and democratic people in Britain. Without granting self determination to the Irish people, without

upholding the right to self determination of nations, it will be impossible to build a modern, democratic society in Britain.

The Central Committee of RCPB(ML) is calling on all its units, activists and friends, on workers and other democratic sections to mobilise for and join the demonstration.

Press Communiqué

Continued from page 1

Office condemned Sinn Féin for refusing at its special conference held last weekend to accept the Downing Street Declaration.

Workers must give these matters serious consideration. The government blames everyone else for preventing peace. Does history not show that the British presence in Ireland, the settlements, playing the "orange card", partitioning the country and so on have always given rise to tragedy for the Irish people and created divisions amongst them, whilst the British armed forces and undercover agencies act to crush the resistance and preserve the status quo? It is the government itself which must be condemned for having

so far refused to take the steps necessary to allow peace in Ireland.

Rather than demanding that the Irish government amend its constitution, the British government should be addressing legislation such as the Government of Ireland Act with a view to ending British sovereignty over northern Ireland. This would not only remove the biggest obstacle to a peaceful settlement in Ireland, but would be a step towards a modern constitution for Britain based on modern definitions and principles such as the inalienable right of nations to self determination.

Sinn Féin pointed out at its conference the principal contradiction contained in the Downing Street Declaration: if the British government now

accepts, as it did for the first time in the Declaration, the right of the Irish to self determination, then it must also accept all the consequences of this. This means, for example, ceasing to dictate to the Irish about what form of talks should be held to bring about peace, who should take part and what the agenda should be. The Irish themselves must be allowed to decide how their country should be reunified. But, above all, the decisive step which the government can take is to announce its intention to withdraw.

It is a positive step that the British government has for the first time been forced to recognise the right to self determination for the Irish. But it cannot stop there if it is serious

about peace. The annexation of part of Ireland must not be allowed to continue. Both history and the present point to the need for the British government to take this decisive step.

The government is trying to bring about an end to its problems in Ireland in a way which suits its own interests rather than those of the Irish people, the British people and all humanity. The working class must make its voice heard on this matter.

The government must take the decisive step for peace — Withdrawal!

British interference in the Irish peace process must end!

For the right to self determination for all nations!

Repeal the Government of Ireland Act!

MARCH FOR BRITISH WITHDRAWAL FROM IRELAND

Saturday 13 August

**Assemble at Kennington Park
(Oval Tube) 12:00 noon**